**TEACHING FOR UNDERSTANDING UNIT/PROJECT ORGANIZER:**

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| **Your Name or Team Names: Evergreen State College** | **This Column is for Coach Comments** |
| **Date: March 2011** |  |
| **Title of Your Unit or Project: creating a sustainable and healthy community:** |  |
| **Setting for the Unit or Project: collaborative across classes at our college** |  |
| **Subject Area: public health, systems thinking, composition, sociology, leadership** |  |
| **Grade Level: college** |  |
| **Learners Who Will Experience the Unit/Project: adults** |  |
| **Approximate Time the Unit or Project May Take: up to 10 weeks** |  |
| **Major Resources Needed:** |  |
| **Brief Summary of Your Unit or Project: (Write a 3-5 sentence summary describing your unit or project.**  **This project will focus on understanding the needs of a community in Washington State, in particular, working with the community of Evergreen students during times of economic distress as is currently being experienced Students will conduct a needs assessment with respect to health, education, the built environment, access to nature, sustainability, and social support, and institutional social capital in the community. They will review the existing vision of the community for a healthier/sustainable community, and compare it to existing conditions, as revealed in the assessment. Students will present their findings to the community and convene discussions among community members to reflect on the gap, if any, between current conditions and their vision; anticipating future impacts of further economic distress, discuss how the community might prepare for or respond to increased challenges to the community's well-being. The community's discussions may lead to action steps, and the students may lead or assist in resulting change efforts.** | What an interesting unit that is really based in a meaningful context. |

**(OPTIONAL in TfU 1) Throughlines [TLs] – (Skip this section if you do not want to write TLs.** TLs are large, Overarching **Understanding** Goals for an entire year, or quarter, or whole course etc. These general, overarching goals stay the same for every unit/project throughout the entire year, or quarter, etc. Throughlines are OPTIONAL in TfU 1 because they are emphasized in TfU 2).

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| **H**  **TL 1**  **Question: What are the dimensions of well-being in terms of community?**  Statement: Learners will understand that well-being is influenced by a variety of interconnected factors - physical, social, financial, aesthetic,etc. - and that a holistic approach to assessment is useful. | **TL 2**  **Question: When and where and how have communities organized to solve real problems broadly related to health?**    **Statement:** Learners will understand that…  Learners will understand the role of community organizations in garnering the resources needed for improved health in a community. | **TL 3**  **Question: What tools and methods lead to a better understanding of community health issues?**  **Statement:** Learners will understand that…  Learners will understand how to select and use appropriate tools and techniques to conduct needs assessments as well as the process of creating a community vision. | **TL 4**  **Question: health? How have historic events affected the current health of the community?**  **Statement:** Learners will understand that…  Learners will understand how the history of a community shapes its current dimensions. | **This Column is for Coach Comments**  **Thanks for writing throughlines for your unit. You may want to check the alignment of your question and statement forms (for example, TL 3 seems to be dealing with somewhat different understandings).** |

**Generative Topic [GT]**

**What is your Generative Topic? \_\_\_Community engagement: the best medicine?\_\_\_**

**(Write your generative topic on the line above as a phrase, concept, or question from your discipline.)**

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|  | **This Column is for Coach Comments** |
| 1. **Centrality:** (In which discipline do you see your topic as central, and why do you believe this topic of central importance to your discipline?)   This topic is interdisciplinary, as is the central focus of education at The Evergreen State College. (The health of community is central to the building of a sustainable community. It is the drive and also one of the ultimate goals of working for sustainability). | Good. |
| 1. **Engagement:** Why will it interest you and your intended audience (learners)--or have the potential to become interesting? How might you make it interesting to your intended audience?   The community focus of this topic will be particularly interesting to students because they will have to actually analyze a living/complex, if small, community for needs, available resources, and gaps and see factors of multiple levels at work. Also, they will be able to make a personal connection to the topic they’re studying as they are members of the community. The unit functions as an action research project—teachers will be engaged because we don’t know all the answers either!And like our students, the question matters—we are all invested in helping create healthier communities. | I think the unit will be engaging because of the personal nature of it. Please add a bit how it will be interesting to you as teachers. |
| 1. **Accessibility:** What are 2-3 specific examples of resources related to the topic that are available?   Secondary sources of data with respect to health and education are available in most local health jurisdictions; community organizations also have information on community needs; local law enforcements would also have information on illegal behavior that could point to specific needs; local parks departments could also tell us about available access to nature and the state of repair of local parks. Many students will not have done needs assessments prior to this—it would be helpful to have an outside speaker come in and talk about how they conduct them for their org. | A good range of sources. Will all your students have done needs assessments like this previously? Could you have a guest speaker talking about the research process or similar research that has been done? |
| 1. **Connections:** How does the topic relate to other topics in the discipline, to other disciplines, and beyond the disciplines to life in the world at large?   **This topic relates to population health, to education, to environmental studies, to sociology, to qualitative and quantitative methods, and to writing because the learners would have to learn how to do community needs assessment (look at secondary data, gather primary data as possible, conduct community meetings, interview key informants) as well as to analyze the results of the data-**gathering and present the findings in a literate and understandable manner. This community based project will be helping the student community to have an understanding of their health conditions, issues, and potential causes. It will also point to possible ways of improving the situation. Students will not only learn practical skills of making community health assessments, they will establish a sense of responsibility for serving the community. The tools students gain in this unit can be adapted to wide variety of issues, in all kinds of communities. | Lots of disciplinary connections. How would you say it connections to life in the world at large? |
| **5.   Challenges:** Describe what may be potential “troublesome knowledge”--        challenges for your intended audience in understanding this topic and        how you might design the project/unit to address likely challenges  It will be challenging to involve the community, get secondary sources of information, do interviews, etc, with busy people who work and live in the chosen community. As well, our students have varying levels of academic preparation, so helping them function well as groups will be important. In addition, the tools and methods and approaches they are learning will be applicable to other arenas of their lives. Because the topic is relevant for students, they are likely to be engaged, and that engagement will increase students’ motivation to do the work. We also need to work towards scaffolding the introductory and guiding inquiry poa’s so that students get to work through developmental steps that will help them be successful with the culminating poa’s. | Explain a bit how you will meet these very real challenges. |
| **Your Summary Reflection**: (Briefly summarize major points from your analysis of your Generative Topic (above, 1-5). Using some of the points above, explain why this is a strong Generative Topic for your unit/project.  Our generative topic connects students with various disciplines and requires interdisciplinary leveraging. Its relevance is tied to the fact that students will put new knowledge and skills into practice in their own community and have the opportunity not only to learn, but to make a contribution to the community's well-being. The project introduces students to specific research strategies related to the question of creating healthier communities—so we are helping them learn an analytical change process. We will be working with a variety of materials and can rely on strong information technology support through our librarians. By working on group process as an integral part of the work, we can help make sure that all students are engaged in a process of meaningful investigation. Students with more expertise coming into the program will have opportunities do complete more extensive research/analysis and writing projects. | Don’t forget to put your summary reflection here. Kris—we are trying to summarize here. Let us know what isn’t working about our text! |

**Unit/PROJECT-Level Understanding Goals [UGs]—(**Write three or four goals specific to your particular unit/project. Your unit/project Understanding Goals will eventually lead you to design three to five… Performances of Understanding aimed to help learners reach your Understanding Goals).

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| **UG 1**  **Question:**  **What research methods and assessment tools are available to help understand the well-being of a community?**  **Statement:** (knowledge/methods) Learners will understand the dimensions of community well-being, and the value of a holistic approach. Learners will understand a variety of assessment tools that measure different aspects of well-being and they will understand the need for coherence between methods and values when assessing a community.  What are the dimensions of community well-being? How would I assess them? | **UG 2**  **Question: What role have community organizations played in garnering resources to improve community health?**    **Statement:** (knowledge/purpose) Learners will understand that which approaches to assessment empower the community being assessed—which approaches to assessment increase the community's capacity to improve its lot. Learners will understand the role community organizations play in doing these assessments.  What roles do community organizations play in improving community health? | **UG3 3**  **Question: What health risks do the built and natural environments pose to individuals and the community?**  **Statement:** (knowledge) Learners will understand the relationships between sustainability, the built and natural environments, and the health risks to individuals and to overall community health.  What health risks are posed by the natural and built environment in my community? | **UG 4**  **Question:**  **What is the role of a larger community in supporting the student community and facilitating change?**  **Statement:** (methods) Learners will understand that their community is nested in larger systems and intersects with yet others. They will understand the relationships, dynamics and mutual responsibilities between their community and these other systems. Sustainability for all, by all, of all.  How do I work with others to facilitate change? | **UG 5** | **This Column is for Coach Comments**  **Please add question forms for your UGs.**  **Your UGs seem to be well written and ontrack. I am eager to see how you reversion them when you get to assignment 4.1.**  **UG1- As I mentioned in 4.1, please take out the ‘behavioural’ language I highlighted. You may also want to reversion the statement to include the knowledge DoU more explicitly (as it is in your question form).**  **UG2- I see knowledge and methods here. Would you want to make the purpose more explicit?**  **UG3- good.**  **UG4- I like this updated question form- clear andconcise.** |

**Performances of Understanding [PoU]….................. and................……. Ongoing Assessments**

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| **Understanding goals**  (Write the number of the Understanding Goal or Goals that are targeted by each Performance of Understanding? E.g., UG1, or UGs 3 and 4) | **Performances of Understanding**  (What will learners say, do, or make to learn your Understanding Goals and to demonstrate that they understand your Understanding Goals?) | **Ongoing Assessments**  How will you know learners understand? What evidence/criteria should an assessor be looking for in "high quality work/thought in EACH performance?" Give a few examples of what an assessor might predict that learners will do or say or what criteria an assessor might use to assess learner understanding (products, presentations…) in "high level" work for EACH of your Performances? Let the questions below help in the design of your assessments. | **This Column is for Coach Comments** |
| **UG 1** | **Performance 1: (Introductory) In groups, learners will brainstorm dimensions of community health, create posters, and then discuss what they notice/value/question about the group’s posters overall.** | Who? Students and teachers  What? Group posters displaying their understanding of community health  How? InformallyLooking for what? looking to see what students understand about community health at the beginning—the extent to which they understand the multiple dimensions of community health. | **Good reversion of the OA. Are there any specific understandings or misconceptions you’d be looking for?** |
| **UG 1** | **Performance 2 (introductory) After a discussion of dimensions of community health, students return to groups to discuss how they would assess and or measure any of these dimensions. Ideas go onto posters, followed by a gallery walk and conversation.** | Who? Students and teachers  What? Posters identifying tools and strategies for measuring community health  How? Informally again  Looking for what? Evidence of students’ current knowledge about/understanding of what is measurable, and how. High quality work would demonstrate knowledge of assessment methods, ability to link method to purpose, and ability to link method to community empowerment. | **Nice building on PoU1. Again, for your criteria, what would indicate ‘high quality’ work?** |
| **UG1** | **Performance 3**  **(guided inquiry) Learners will read relevant case studies to examine several strategies and techniques to measure a community's health or well-being; some cases will be action research cases. Students will identify key factors in the cases in terms of conditions and assessment strategies used, to determine what influenced their success or failure. Students will then consider the conditions of their own community relative to these factors and determine which strategies they believe will best serve their inquiry purpose. They will present their recommendations to the class, making explicit their reasoning via posters.The final outcome will be short/in class presentations of group recommendations about strategies from the case studies would be most useful for students to use to assess their own community.** | **Who** Faculty and students  **What** Group presentations about case analyses, particularly their work on methods and factors  **How** Informally at posters; we could also ask students to write out their understanding for a more formal assessment.  **Looking for what**? We are looking for evidence of students’ understanding about the how to decide which strategies and techniques to use to assess health in their community. **CRITERIA for assessing** (signs of) a high level of understanding? **Faculty will weigh the appropriateness of the students' recommendations based on criteria developed by the teachers to assess the in-class poster presentations that each group presents. These criteria can also be used by students to provide feedback to each other using the ladder of feedback.** | The level of detail about the PoU that you added is very helpful in getting a fuller picture of what the students will be doing. Thanks for taking us through it step by step. |
| **UG2 & UG 4** | **Performance 4 (guided inquiry)**  **Students will learn about the vision, goals and activities of the community by looking at organizations and groups working in the community. Working in small groups, students will inventory the organizations, developing and conducting structured interviews, creating both detailed transcripts and summary analyses. The purpose of this performance is to develop and use tools for understanding the role and vision of community organizations relating to community health.** | Who?Faculty and students  What? Transcripts and summary analyses of interviews with community groups; also the interview protocols students develop prior to meeting with groups.  How? formal  Looking for what? **The products will be assessed by faculty for clarity and appropriateness of questions; comprehensiveness of transcript and the relevance of the summaries to the existing issues, validated in relation to secondary sources.** | For ‘how?’ stick to formal or informal assessment. Some of the details of how may fit better in the PoU column. |
| **UG1 & UG 3** | **Performance 5 (guided inquiry)**  **Students will carry out a variety of needs assessment techniques: small sample surveys; key informant interviews; community meetings and summarize their work in an analytical memo. Students will present the results of their variety of needs assessments to the class and the teachers, receive feedback, revised accordingly, and then offer the assessment results to the community. New issues may be revealed through this process.** | Who? Students, faculty  What? Written document—analytical memo  How? Informally with the presentations and first drafts; formally with revised drafts.  Looking for what? **students' identification of issues relative to data discovered by students' research.** | Don’t forget the ‘how’?  Explain more how the students will offer the results to the community. What kind of forum would this take? Yes, keep thinking about this. It would certainly work as a separate PoU. |
| **UG1, UG 2, UG 3** | **Performance 6 (culminating)**  **Students will work in small groups to analyze secondary data from the local health department, EPA, tribal structures and other community data resources to develop an assessment of the environmental determinants of health for the community. This will include an analysis of pollutants, access to physical activity resources, formal and informal educational resources , and other resources. Students will present the results of their findings to the class and teachers.**  **The focus for this work will be informed by the work students do in PofA 5.** | Who? Faculty  What? Written analyses  How? Informally with initial drafts; formally with revisions  Looking for what?  **Faculty will assess student understanding of relationship between these environmental and behavioral factors and the health of its members in the student presentations.** | Does this PoU connect to the previous ones in any way? What links could it be so it isn’t a discrete activity?  Formally or informally?  Thanks for making the link to PoU5 explicit! |
| **UG 4** | **Performance 7 (culminating)**  **Students will review their experience with this action research project and reflect on the impact of the action research on their community. Then students will be asked to synthesize in writing what they have learned about working with others to affect change in a community. They will share with peers in small groups, then with whole group and discuss.** | Who? Students and faculty  What? Written reflections and synthesis  How? informally and formally  Looking for what?  **Understanding of change process and collaboration and their own roles within that as reflected in presentations (students will look for) Faculty will assessunderstanding in the reflective piece based on the degree of honesty in their critiques and discussion, their ability to recognize personal contributions and shortcomings, leadership in their group dynamics, and adaptability of their group to challenges faced. Faculty will also look for evidence that students understand a process of change.** | Formally or informally? |
| UG2 and UG 4 | **Performance 8 (culminating)**  **Students will offer their assessment results to the community. This could take the form of a written document, participation at a community meeting, or the creation of a new community gathering. New issues may be revealed through this process.** | Who: faculty, students and community leaders  What: final documents summarizing results; written plans to organize and engage community members; reflection memo after the event discussing what happened  How: formally  Looking for what: evidence that students can clearly communicate results of their research to diverse readers; evidence that students can develop a sensible, doable plan for organizing a meeting; evidence that students can anticipate needs for facilitation; evidence of students’ abilities to reflect on quality of their own work. Community members might elect to comment on clarity or value of reports, effectiveness of gathering. | Please add the assessment column to this PoU. Thanks for offering more details about how the result sharing could take place. |
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